What Yaxley Infant School does to teach reading though the use of phonics.

At YIS we:

Teach phonics as a method for children to learn to read words. For most children this begins at age 5 or Foundation Stage. Before the age of 5 all children are involved in pre-reading activities to prepare them for phonics work (See Phase 1). At YIS we work in partnership with our preschool settings to ensure continuity and progression where possible.

Phonics is taught in a systematic way across the whole school, with shared approaches and familiar, consistent resources. The programme used is 'Little Wandle letters and sounds,' this is a published and approved programme by the Department for Education (DfE)

Phonics is set within a rich language curriculum that develops speaking and listening, reading, and writing skills in a variety of contexts

All teachers and support staff have high level training which is updated and monitored by peers and the leadership.

Monitoring is in place to ensure that all phonics teaching is high quality. This is essential to prevent children from falling behind wherever possible. Support is put in place for children who are not making sufficient progress, to keep up or catch up. The lowest 20% of attainers in phonics are monitored closely across the school, assessed regularly and support is quickly put into place.

There are assessment systems in place to track how all children are progressing in phonics- using Little Wandle assessments and phonics tracker to record those outcomes. This data is submitted half termly or at the end of a 5 week unit to the lead teacher who makes recommendations based on the children's progress.

Where children do fall behind, they are given intervention (specific support with their phonics) to help them catch up as soon as possible. This is targeted at the lowest 20% of the school and is a dynamic support structure.

In school using the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds programme, you would usually expect to see the following:

Children in Reception, Y1 and Y2 have a 20–25-minute phonics session every day.

- direct teaching in frequent, short bursts
- consistency of approach
- secure, systematic progression in phonics learning
- maintaining pace of learning
- providing repeated practice
- application of phonics using matched decodable books
- early identification of children at risk of falling behind, linked to the provision of effective keep-up support.
- Outside of the phonics session children are given lots of opportunities to apply the new skills that they have learned in all the lessons that they do. The more opportunities they are given the sooner they will become confident with these skills. Books given to the children are appropriate to the stage of their phonics teaching and acquisition. This allows the children to practice those skills.

Is this the only way that children are taught to read?

Absolutely not! Phonics is the first step in helping children to crack the code of reading and writing. However, children also need to learn strategies to tackle words that can't be decoded easily and also to be able to understand and engage with what they read.

Reading skills and of course a love of reading and books are also developed through regularly Reading Aloud to children, daily story sessions are an important routine and favourite stories are shared frequently. Children are encouraged to take home their own self chosen books on a daily basis.

Reading Practice sessions involve a group of children reading the same book/material with a teacher. Within the session they will revise specific skills then read independently up to a certain point in the book. The lessons take place three times a week following a planned structure to cover the three main skills of fluency, prosody, and comprehension. The children revisit key elements of phonics taught that week or when they need consolidation of previously taught phonics. We also use electronic books as part of this experience, giving children a virtual library to read and enjoy.

English Lessons are another key opportunity for the teaching of reading. English is always taught in the context of the theme, giving purpose, and meaning to the reason to read and write. Children are supported through a variety of methods, such as talk for writing, speaking, and listening, specific skills teaching, grammar skills, mantle of the expert, learning texts by heart and adding actions to support memory, shared reading, reading practice and writing sessions. Children are encouraged to magpie words and expectations are always high. Clearly many parts of this process will help to develop children's reading skills. Within this process there will be many opportunities for Shared Reading in which a teacher will plan to model or develop a specific reading skill with a group of children.